



Linkages to Learning, a Collaborative School-based Partnership among the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Public Schools, Public and Private Agencies, Families and Communities

Families and Communities Grow with Volunteers

On a warm June evening at the Audubon Naturalist Society's Woodend Estate, a rare convergence of a most precious species occurred. Indeed, that night, volunteers with the Linkages to Learning program came together to be honored for their dedication and invaluable service to the Linkages families.



Volunteers and staff join together at the Audubon to celebrate!

The evening was all about volunteers. Emily Button, a Linkages to Learning AmeriCorps volunteer, planned the event. Nancy Hinojosa, an active Summit Hall ES volunteer, prepared the delicious food that the guests enjoyed. The event showcased committed community volunteers who made important and wide-ranging contributions from teaching ESL and literacy classes, tutoring children after-school, leading after-school enrichment programs and special prevention workshops and organizing drives for food, holiday gifts, school supplies, and coats.

Linkages staff eloquently articulated the special qualities of these volunteers so deserving of recognition. In admonishing the dictionary definition of tutors, which referred only to their role of instruction, Carol Binta, site coordinator at Maryvale E.S. explained that "Our tutors are volunteers who provide nurturing, encouragement, love, and their undivided attention. I didn't find these words in the dictionary at all. So that tells me that the Linkages tutors are extraordinary, quite above the norm. They are supernatural indeed. And we really appreciate them for not only what they do, but how they do it."

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Powerful Women Saluted at Mothers Tea

At Linkages third annual Mothers Empowerment Tea this spring, keynote speaker, A'Lelia Perry Bundles, award-winning biographer of her great, great-grandmother, notable African-American entrepreneur Madam C.J. Walker, acknowledged the vital role parents have in shaping their children's lives.

She attributed her own accomplishments to the "legacy of learning left to me by four generations of strong women, and especially because of my own mother's encouragement to "follow my dreams."

Bundles said, "despite my great, great-grandmother's own experience of deprivation, loss and abuse, she understood she had the power to make the life of her own children better, and that this was a great motivator for her."

"By becoming a millionaire and a leader in the hair care business, Madam C.J. Walker employed thousands of other women and made life better for their children. She not only used her success to help other women," said Bundles, "but she told them that their first duty was to help humanity."

She said, 'use your money to make a difference', and they did, improving their communities through their philanthropy and by writing to President Wilson to end lynching."

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Congressman Chris Van Hollen of Maryland's 8th district, greets A'Lelia Perry Bundles. Dr. Paul Scott, MCPS representative to Linkages Resource Team, is in the background.

"Every child has the right to reach his or her full potential and to be as successful as they want to be. Today, as we celebrate mothers and the great job they do to nurture children, we recognize that in our nation and indeed around the world, parents are powerful influencers, shaping the future of our children and our society."

— Congressman Chris Van Hollen
Mothers Empowerment Tea, May 2005

Thanks to the Supporters of Linkages to Learning's Third Annual Mothers Tea:

In-Kind Supporters:

American Plant Food
Blair H.S. String Ensemble
The City of Rockville and the Glenview Mansion
The Gazette Newspaper
Honest Tea
Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services
Montgomery County Public School
Summit Hall ES International Dance Club
Unión Y Sabor and Through the Kitchen Door
Whole Foods Market

Platinum Sponsors: \$500+

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Holy Cross Hospital

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The Capitol Steps
Carrabba's Italian Grill
Caribbean Feast Restaurant
Catch Can Boutique & Susanne Mclean
Amy Christianson, LCSW-C
Charmed I'm Sure™ by Linnette
Chico's of Potomac
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at U. of Maryland
Cong. Chris Van Hollen

The Container Store
County Executive Doug Duncan & the Montgomery County Council
Dave & Buster's
The David Letterman Show
David's Beautiful People
El Andariego Restaurant
Ell Events and Entertainment
Friends of the National Zoo
Gaithersburg Marriott Washington Center
Gifford's Ice Cream and Candy Co.
Hollywood East, Inc.
Honest Tea
Imagination Stage
Indian Spring Country Club
Jafrá Cosmetics
Johnson's Florist & Garden Ctrs.
Kammerman Portraits
Kirsten's Café and a Bakery
Loew's Cineplex Entertainment
Mamma Lucia Restaurants
Mi Rancho Restaurant
Mon Ami Gabi Restaurant
Morning Glory Seaside Inn
Mosaic Cuisine and Cafe
My Gym Children's Fitness Ctr.
The Nail & Body Spa
National Museum of Women in the Arts
National Philharmonic
Olney Grille
Olney Theater Center for the Arts
The Orvis Company
Phillips Famous Seafood Express
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Rika's Pastries
Ridgewells Catering
Round House Theatre
The Savory Cafe
Silver Stars Gymnastics & Kids' Athletic Club
Strosnider's Hardware, Bethesda
Thrive Yoga
Lynne Yao, M.D., INOVA Fairfax Hospital

..and to all of our friends who showed their support by attending the event or sharing a contribution.



Above: Summit Hall ES kindergartners and first graders perform "Chapanecas" a Mexican folk dance at the Tea, led by Linkages parent Maria Fernandez .

Volunteers, continued, from p. 1

In recognizing an ESL volunteer, Ana Schmitz, site coordinator at Summit Hall ES, said, "Maria keeps our classes running. She is so flexible. If I say, 'Maria, today the class is in the cafeteria,' she goes there. If I say, 'Maria, can you work with this group at another level?' she does. She is changing lives by helping the immigrant community to become better integrated into American society by improving their language skills."

The volunteers came from many walks of life -- professionals, students, seniors and Linkages parents who have become engaged with the program and an important part of their school community.



Parent volunteer measures Summit Hall ES dancer for costume.

Linkages parents perform a variety of valuable services, increasing family involvement and their knowledge of the community as they volunteer, a hallmark of Linkages to Learning.

They provide child care so other parents can participate in Linkages services. They offer "hands on" help at their school sites, bring "goodies" to meetings to build social networks and attendance, collect forms, organize supplies and even teach classes and lead workshops for children and families.

"We live in an incredibly supportive and progressive community. People here understand that the strength of a community is measured by those with the fewest resources, not the most, and that our collective future will be brightest if every single individual is a productive, contributing member. We're very proud of the fact that we try to engage all of our residents who'd like to give a hand, and that we have so many thoughtful, dedicated supporters."

— Vivian Yao, nonprofit provider representative
Linkages Resource Team

Mothers Empowerment Tea, from p. 1

Madam C.J. Walker's commitment to help other women arose from the strength and independence she developed through her own life struggles.

Bundles observed that "As a destitute single mother, she found she could rely upon other women who cared— her neighbors, a teacher, a social worker. Other women helped her, and they helped her daughter go to kindergarten. She learned from them and, eventually, when she was in the position to do so, she gave back."

"There is no royal flower strewn path to success. And if there is, I have not found it, for whatever success I have attained has been the result of much hard work and many sleepless nights... I got my start by giving myself a start. So don't sit and wait for the opportunities to come. You have to get up and make them for yourself!"

—Madam C.J. Walker

Representing the accomplishments of Linkages to Learning mothers, Pilar Rocio Obando was recognized by County Council president Tom Perez at the Mothers Tea. Obando emigrated to the United States with her husband and five children to reside in Gaithersburg several years ago. She participated in Linkages sponsored activities at Summit Hall ES, including its first *Through the Kitchen Door* training program. Working closely with Linkages to Learning site coordinator Ana Schmitz, Pilar was part of a group of mothers from Summit Hall who organized *Unión Y Sabor*, a catering micro-business.



County Council President Tom Perez congratulates Obando and Linkages Through the Kitchen Door participants.



Linkages Loves Community Volunteers!



Dilma Mercedes, for volunteer administrative support work at Parkland MS.

Brenda Desouza, for many years of volunteering to provide child-care at Parkland MS.

Daisy Rivadeneira, for volunteering to provide childcare at Summit Hall ES.

Jackeline Roca, for volunteering to teach computer classes to Summit Hall ES parents.

Sofia Nichos, for helping with the Linkages Dance Club and providing classroom help at Summit Hall ES.

Xiomara Pacheco, for teaching dance and serving as a computer teacher at Summit Hall ES.

Adriana Gutierrez, for volunteering at Summit Hall ES.

Maria Fernandez, for volunteering with Dance Club and providing classroom assistance at Summit Hall ES.

Arianne Gonzalez, for serving as Dance Club instructor at Summit Hall ES.

Elaine Marpawloski, for many years volunteer service teaching English classes to Summit Hall ES parents.

Beatriz Mendoza of the Division of Family and Community Partnerships, for presenting to Rolling Terrace ES parents.

Elba Batiz, for presenting to Linkages parents and clothing to families at Rolling Terrace ES.

Joyce Lim, for teaching ESL classes to Rolling Terrace ES parents.

Juan Valdez of Embassy Mortgage, for presenting a financial workshop to Linkages parents at Rolling Terrace ES.

Liliana Pinzon M.D., for presenting to Linkages mothers at Rolling Terrace ES.

Mrs. Del Val of Girl Scouts of America, for presenting to girls at Rolling Terrace ES.

Nelly Gama, for providing support services in the Linkages office at Rolling Terrace ES.

Nilda Colgrove of MCPS for presenting to Linkages mothers at Rolling Terrace ES.



Maryvale ES moms participating in weekly "Sistah Speaks" support group.

Vivian Azar of the Multicultural Center for presenting to Linkages mothers at Rolling Terrace ES.

Helen Chang, for teaching computer classes for Linkages parents at Highland ES.

Michele Yemane, for teaching ESL classes for Linkages parents at Highland ES.

Sophia Shek-Sohail, for teaching ESL classes for Linkages parents at Highland ES.

Tracy, Anna, and Jenna of Manpower, for presenting to the women's empowerment group at Highland ES.

Amy Goldberg of The Runaround, for presenting "Getting and Staying Organized" and Entrepreneurs Brunch" to Greencastle ES & Banneker MS parents.

Faith Edwards of Consumer Credit Counseling Services, for presenting "Paths to Home Ownership" and "Financial Empowerment" to Greencastle ES & Banneker MS parents.

Katrice Edwards of Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, for presenting "Paths to Home Ownership" to Greencastle ES & Banneker MS parents.

Loretta LeFlore Wells of LeFlore By Design, for presenting at the "Entrepreneur's Brunch" to Greencastle ES & Banneker MS parents.

Melanie Isis of Montgomery Housing Partnership, for presenting "Paths to Home Ownership" to Greencastle & Banneker parents.

Mindi Goodpastor, for presenting "Stress Management for Parents" at Greencastle ES & Banneker MS and for donating furniture and clothing to Highland ES families.

Misti Burmeister of Inspirion Inc., for presenting "Envisioning Your Future" to Greencastle ES & Banneker MS parents.



Linkages Loves Community Volunteers!



Myrna Jarquin of MCHP, for presenting to the Wednesday Morning Mothers Group for Greencastle & Banneker.

Shannon Klabnik of Tastefully Simple, for presenting at the "Entrepreneur's Brunch" for Greencastle ES & Banneker MS parents.

Valerie Turner, President of Belle Etiquette and Charm, for leading an etiquette group for girls at Banneker Middle School.

Vicki Scofield of

Pansimonium, for presenting at the "Entrepreneur's Brunch" for Greencastle ES and Banneker MS parents.

Sierra Reynolds, for serving as a childcare volunteer for Greencastle ES and Banneker MS families.

Melody Reynolds, for volunteering with childcare and supporting resource development at Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.

Kathleen Roy, for volunteering to teach ESL to Harmony Hills ES & Viers Mill ES parents.

Tamiko Thomas, for volunteering to teach ESL to Harmony Hills ES & Viers Mill ES parents.

Linda Heun, for volunteering to teach ESL to Harmony Hills ES & Viers Mill ES parents.

Ina Jee, for volunteering to teach ESL to Harmony Hills ES & Viers Mill ES parents.



Grand-readers from Interages tutor Maryvale ES students.

Livia Laffey, for volunteering to teach ESL to Harmony Hills ES & Viers Mill ES parents.

Andrea Suspes, for volunteering as a Homework Club mentor at Harmony Hills & Viers Mill ES.

John and Ruth Kean, for volunteering as Homework Club mentors at Harmony Hills ES & Viers Mill ES.

Daniel Zaharko, for volunteering as a Homework Club mentor at Harmony Hills ES & Viers Mill ES.

Robert Warr, for volunteering as a Homework Club mentor at Harmony Hills ES & Viers Mill ES.

Terry De Jong, for volunteering as a Homework Club mentor at Harmony Hills ES & Viers Mill ES.

Michelle De Jong, for volunteering as a Homework Club mentor at Harmony Hills ES & Viers Mill ES.

Leslie Klingensmith, for volunteering as a Homework Club mentor and helping with volunteer recruitment at Harmony Hills ES & Viers Mill ES.

Jerry Wintermyer, for volunteering to tutor Linkages students in the Kennedy Cluster.

Chuck and Diane Fillah, for volunteering to tutor Linkages students in the Kennedy Cluster.

Elaine Shaya, for volunteering to teach ESL classes to Fox Chapel ES parents.

Christine Powell, for volunteering to teach English classes to Fox Chapel ES parents and assisting with ESL teacher training.

We apologize for any inadvertent omissions.

All of our volunteers are very valuable to our families and communities!





Thanks to our Donors and Partners Sharing Food, Goods, Services and Other Donations:



Trawick and Associates, for donating Bethesda Big Train baseball tickets.

Camp Calleva, for donating summer camp scholarships.

Camp Pecometh, for donating summer camp scholarships.

Camp Sandy Cove, for donating summer camp scholarships.

Colburn Family Foundation and DC United, for ticket and concession donations to Linkages families through the "Kicks for Kids" program.

Dr. Louis Espejo, of Rockville Family Vision Care and Pearle Vision, for donating eye exams and eyeglasses to 25 Linkages children.

Julie Good, for donating a sewing machine for a Linkages family at Broad Acres Elementary.

The K12 Group, for donating school supplies to Linkages students.

Larraine Trexlor, for donating clothing and other goods.

Linna Barnes, for donating \$100 in Giant Food coupons for Linkages families.

MSI (Montgomery Soccer Inc), for sponsoring its community soccer program at Broad Acres E.S., Highland E.S., and Rolling Terrace E.S.

NIH, for donating circus tickets.

Round House Theatre, for donating summer camp scholarships.

Scholastic and DHHS's Early Childhood Services, for donating hundreds of children's books and activities.

Wyngate ES PTA, for donating school supplies.

George Parker, for donating a summer camp scholarship Parkland MS students.

Brooke Walsh, for donating food and clothing to Maryvale ES families.

Elva Bowden Berry, for donating a child car seat to a Maryvale ES family.



Linkages parents join MSI as coaches and volunteers at three Linkages schools.

Hoover Middle School for donating holiday gifts to Maryvale ES families.

Maryvale PTA, for donating 110 winter coats to Maryvale ES families.

Midwest Research, for donating 50 new toys to Maryvale ES children.

Mr & Mrs. Tom Celi, for donating furniture, clothing, bedding, and kitchenware to Maryvale ES families.

Mr. Ira Lobel, for donating Compaq Presario Notebook and more to a Maryvale ES family.

Our Lady of the Visitation for donating holiday gifts and food baskets to 77 Maryvale ES families.

Rockville Jaycees, for donating school supplies to Maryvale ES children.

Safonia Berry, for donating clothing to Maryvale ES families.

Sherri McKenna, for donating furniture and more to Maryvale ES families.

Margaret Joseph, for donating clothes to Rolling Terrace ES families.

Chris Ladd, for donating couches to a Highland ES family.

Ed Rivera, for donating books for the Linkages to Literacy program at Highland ES.

Landon School, for donating school supplies to Highland ES families.

Rebecca Jones, for clothing for the rummage sale at Highland ES

Tara Bione, for donating new baby clothes from Gymboree for mothers to Highland ES families.

St. Marks Orthodox Church, for donating food baskets to Harmony Hills & Viers Mill ES families.

St. Mathews Presbyterian Church, for funding for Linkages Harmony Hills & Viers Mill ES families.

Farmland ES, for donating food to Harmony Hills & Viers Mill ES families.

We apologize for any inadvertent omissions.

All of our donors and partners are very valuable to our families and communities!



Tweens Teach about Tobacco Dangers

Eastern MS's "Tobacco Free Tweens Theatre Club," an after-school prevention program coordinated by Linkages to Learning in partnership with the County Teen Tobacco Prevention Initiative, launched its second season this year. Funded through the Montgomery County Tobacco Coalition, "Tweens" was developed to help at-risk middle school students to become more knowledgeable about the dangers of using tobacco, while strengthening their leadership and advocacy skills.

After the twelve middle-schoolers reviewed research and worked on team-building activities, the students created original skits, guided by theatre specialist Lucretia Armstrong and youth tobacco prevention expert Wendy Norcross. The students then presented their show to community children and to peers at Eastern MS.

Following their performance at the Y's Indian Springs after-school program, Tweens engaged students in a "question and answer" session, planting the seeds of healthy decision making among their youthful audience. Some of the questions asked by the elementary students included:

- ♦ "Why can they sell cigarettes if they're bad for you?"
- ♦ "Can people quit smoking?"
- ♦ "If someone is smoking near me, what can I do?"

Linkages parent from Eastern, Blanca Delcid, helped facilitate the program, along with Linkages site coordinator Marlene Woods. "Tween" performers Douglas and Jessy Jimenez, rising freshmen at Blair HS, were both awarded summer camp scholarships by Round House Theatre to encourage their budding interest in drama.



Left: CPR fails to revive chronic smoker. Center: Tweens take questions. Right: Tweens with Marlene Woods (top left) and Lucretia Armstrong (seated).

Linkages Welcomes New Staff...

Alis Africano, mental health counselor, Silver Spring International MS
(formerly with New Hampshire Estates ES/Oakview ES)

Elena Aguirre, case manager, Broad Acres ES
(formerly an intern at Broad Acres)

Claudia Bernal, case manager, Highland ES

Fiorella Berta, mental health counselor, Fox Chapel ES

Catherine Martin Davis, mental health counselor, Sally Ride ES

Debi Deutsch-Rios, Linkages director, Silver Spring YMCA

Vienna Johnson, mental health counselor, Argyle MS

Jeanine Lamb, mental health counselor Summit Hall ES

Joyce May, mental health counselor, Washington Grove ES

Norca Salas, site coordinator, Rolling Terrace ES
(formerly an intern at Broad Acres)

Julianne Sim, mental health counselor, Highland ES



...and Bids Farewell to Former Colleagues:

Grace Campbell, case manager, New Hampshire Estates ES and Oakview ES

Nicole Dubois, mental health counselor, Washington Grove ES

Kelly Sicard Jackson, case manager, Greencastle ES/Banneker MS

Silvana Rossi, mental health counselor, Summit Hall ES

Claudiny Stebler, mental health counselor, Argyle MS





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Alternative formats available upon request

Linkages Mothers Retreats 2005



Thanks to the generosity of our supporters and a significant contribution from the Church of Our Lady of Mercy in Potomac, three groups of Linkages mothers representing 12 schools participated in our annual Mothers Retreats at Rising Phoenix. Sixty-two mothers celebrated friendships and the personal growth developed within their school-based support groups through reflection, dialogue and counseling. The women enjoyed arts and crafts, nature activities and team-building exercises in the tranquil environment.

